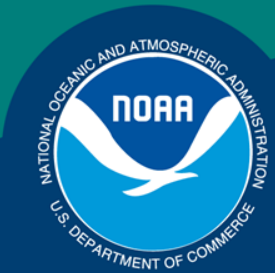


*Science, Service, Stewardship*



# Federal Management of U.S. West Coast Swordfish Fisheries

Rod McInnis  
Regional Administrator  
Southwest Region

May 23, 2011

**NOAA  
FISHERIES  
SERVICE**



## **Presentation Overview**

- Fisheries Management under Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act
- Additional Federal Statutes
  - Endangered Species Act
  - Marine Mammal Protection Act
  - National Environmental and Policy Act
- U.S. West Coast Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan
  - Swordfish Fisheries
    - Transition to Federal management
    - Relevant conservation and management measures



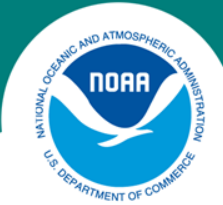
## **The Magnuson Act 35 Years of Adaptive Management**

- Established in 1976 during era of heightened environmental awareness
- Created the fishery management council system
  - Science-based
  - Inclusive, transparent process.
- Major milestones
  - Creation of U.S. Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ)
  - Foreign fleets out, Americanization of fishing fleets
  - Adaptive reauthorizations address overfishing, bycatch, and habitat conservation



## **Federal Fisheries Management Complying with other Federal Statutes**

- **Endangered Species Act**
  - Requires that all Federal agencies conserve threatened and endangered species
  - Consultations are required for fishery management measures
    - Section 7 – Biological Opinion process
    - Incidental Take Statements
- **Marine Mammal Protection Act**
  - Amended in 1994 with new program for managing marine mammal bycatch
    - Stock Assessment Reports
    - Categorization of Fisheries
    - Registration/Monitoring Program
    - Reporting (Observer) Program
    - Take Reduction Plans



## **Federal Fisheries Management Complying with other Federal Statutes**

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
  - All fishery management actions formally analyzed;  
Environmental Assessments (EA) & Environmental Impact  
Statements (EIS)
    - Suite of alternatives reviewed
    - Impacts on human and environmental dimensions assessed
    - Cumulative impacts addressed
    - Significance determined, preferred alternative chosen
    - Transparent & public process



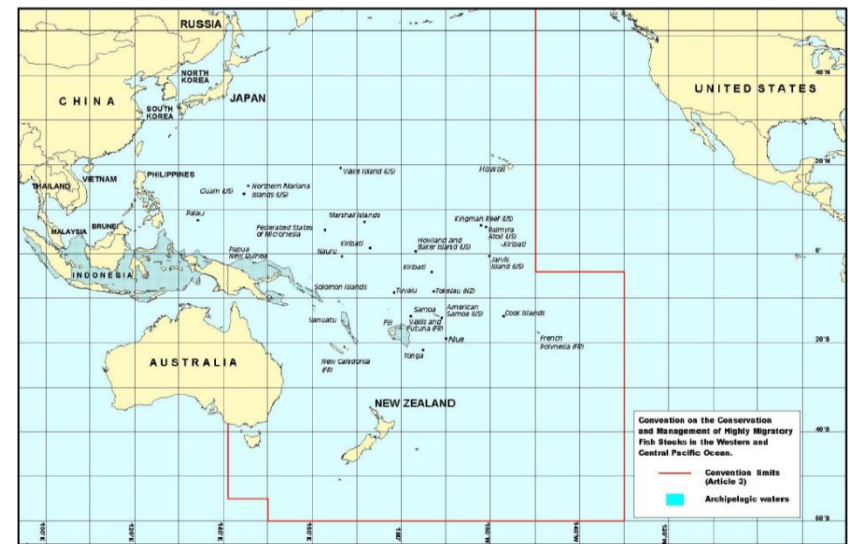
## U.S. West Coast Fishery Management Plans

- Management Plans in place for groundfish, salmon, coastal pelagics, and highly migratory species.
  - All scientifically monitored, managed, and legally enforced under 10 strict national standards of sustainability, such as:
    - *Prevent overfishing while achieving optimum yield*
    - *Be based upon the best scientific information available*
    - *Take into account the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities...consistent with conservation requirements*
    - *Minimize bycatch or mortality from bycatch*



## Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan

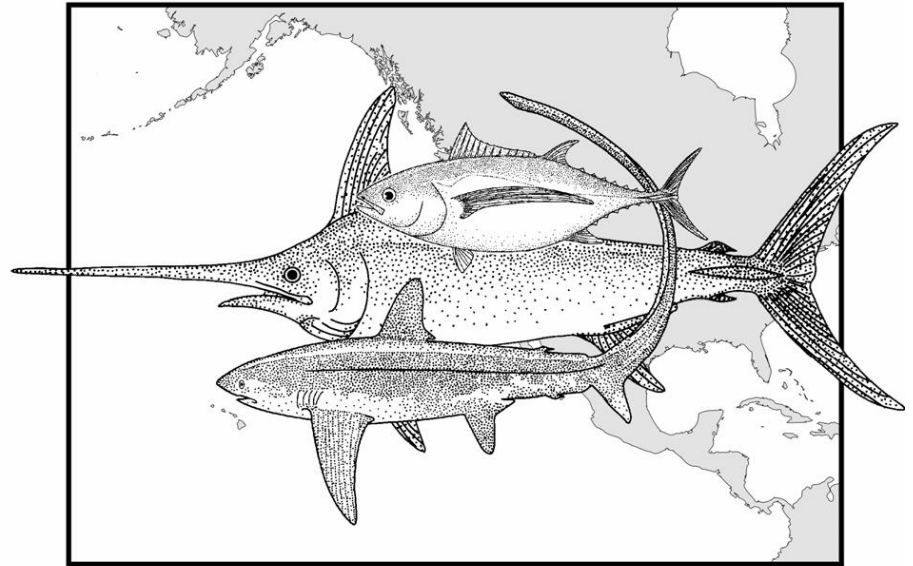
- HMS FMP established in 2005
  - Amendment 1 - Bigeye tuna overfishing
  - Amendment 2 - Catch limits
- Pacific Council
  - CA, OR, and WA co-managers
    - adopt existing state regulations
    - add new federal requirements
  - HMS Management Team
    - state and federal managers & scientists
  - HMS Advisory Subpanel
    - conservation community, fishermen, processors, buyers
  - Science & Statistical Committee
- Party to International Conventions
  - West Coast interests represented in international negotiations and decision-making





## **HMS FMP General Provisions**

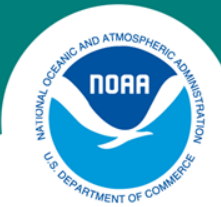
- Tunas
  - albacore & bluefin
  - bigeye, yellowfin, skipjack
- Sharks
  - common thresher
  - blue and mako
- Billfish
  - swordfish
  - striped marlin
- Finfish
  - dorado
  - monitored species



U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone and adjacent high seas off coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington.

2009 West Coast HMS revenue ~\$31,000,000  
Albacore ~\$27,000,000; Swordfish ~\$2,000,000





## **HMS FMP General Provisions**

- Albacore troll and baitboat  
~700 vessels
- Purse seine, seasonal  
~10 vessels
- Pelagic longline, high seas  
1 vessel, no fishing in EEZ
- Drift gillnet, limited entry  
~45 vessels active  
~ limited entry
- Charter Recreational Boats  
~150 vessels
- Harpoon  
~30 vessels





## **HMS FMP General Provisions**

- HMS permits
  - California ~900
  - Oregon ~650
  - Washington ~380
- Bycatch Limits
  - protected species
  - gear based
- Mandatory reporting
  - daily logbooks
  - SAFE document
- Observer program
  - bycatch focus
  - statistical derived sampling protocols
- Prohibited species
- Harvest control rules, set MSY/OY
- Annual harvest guidelines
  - short-fin mako shark 150 tons
  - common thresher shark 340 tons





## **HMS FMP National Provisions**

Shark Finning Act of 2009 makes it illegal to:

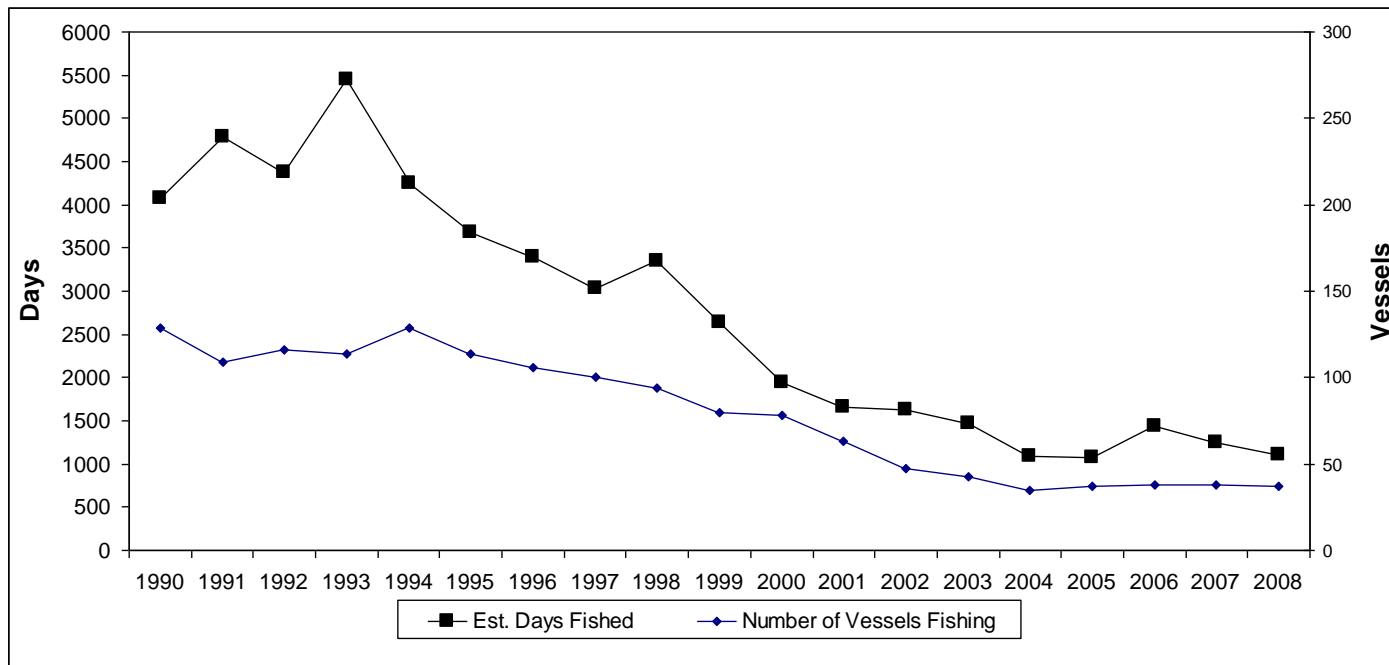
- engage in shark finning
- possess shark fins aboard a vessel without carcass
- land shark fins without carcass.
- annual report to Congress highlighting efforts to monitor and conserve shark populations.

Shark Conservation Act of 2010 will make it illegal to:

- remove any fin from a shark at sea,
- possess or land any fin that is not naturally attached to carcass
- transfer fins that are not naturally attached to carcass from one vessel to another vessel at sea.



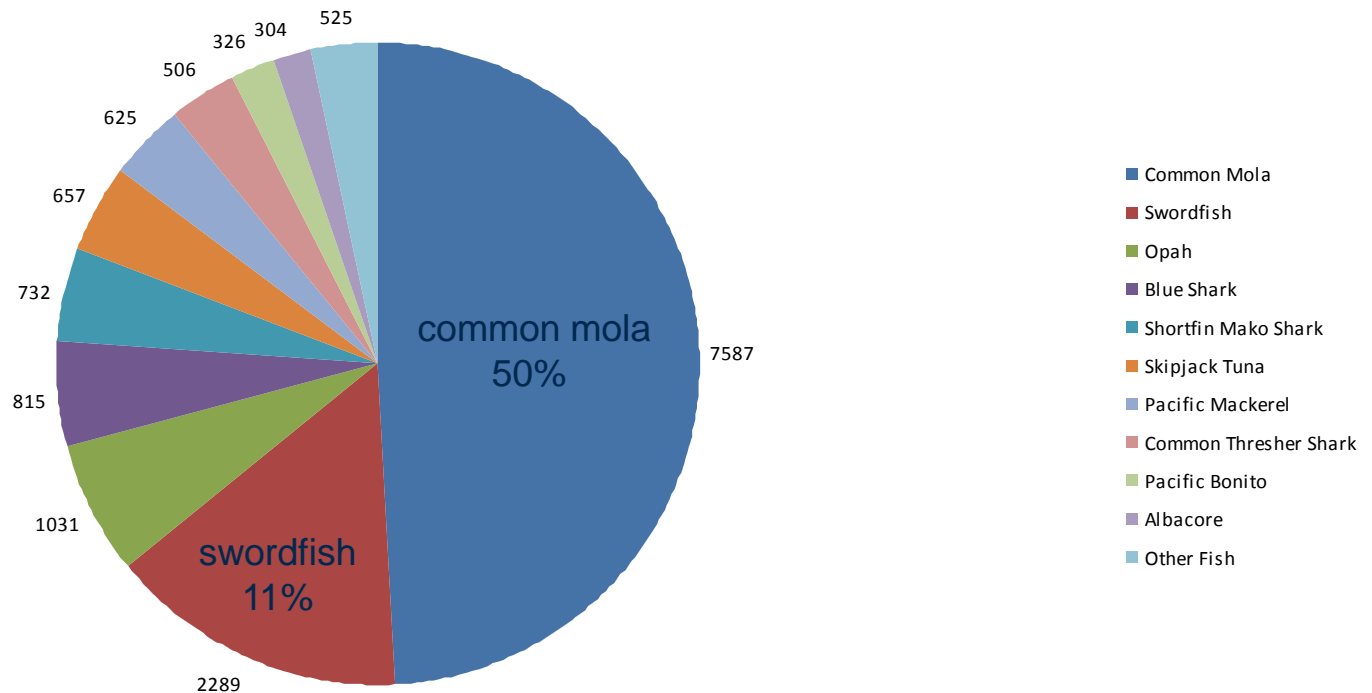
## Large Mesh Drift Gillnet Fishery...





## Average Observed DGN Catch By Number

- NMFS observer data 2001-2010
- >90% molas released alive
- Top 10 species



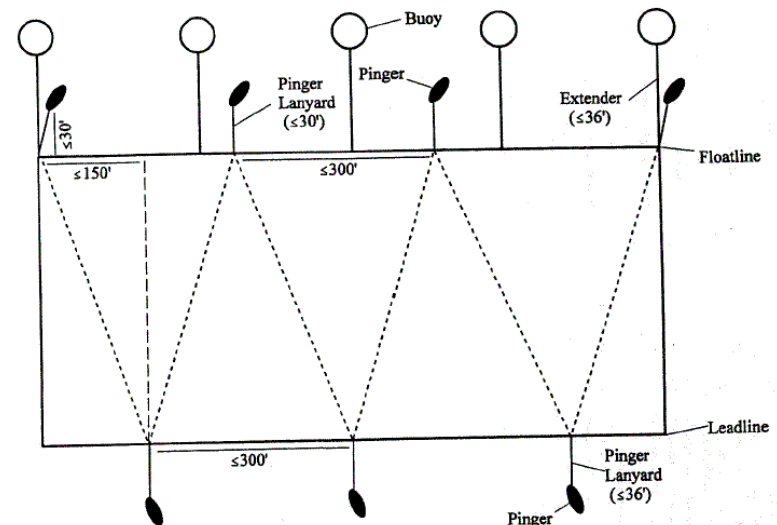


## **Managing Bycatch MMPA List of Fisheries**

- n List of ALL U.S. commercial fisheries
- n Each fishery placed into 1 of 3 categories based on level of marine mammal take
- n Categorization determines requirements
  - n Category I - frequent takes
  - n Category II – occasional takes
  - n Category III - rare or no known takes

# Managing Bycatch Pacific Offshore Cetacean Take Reduction Team

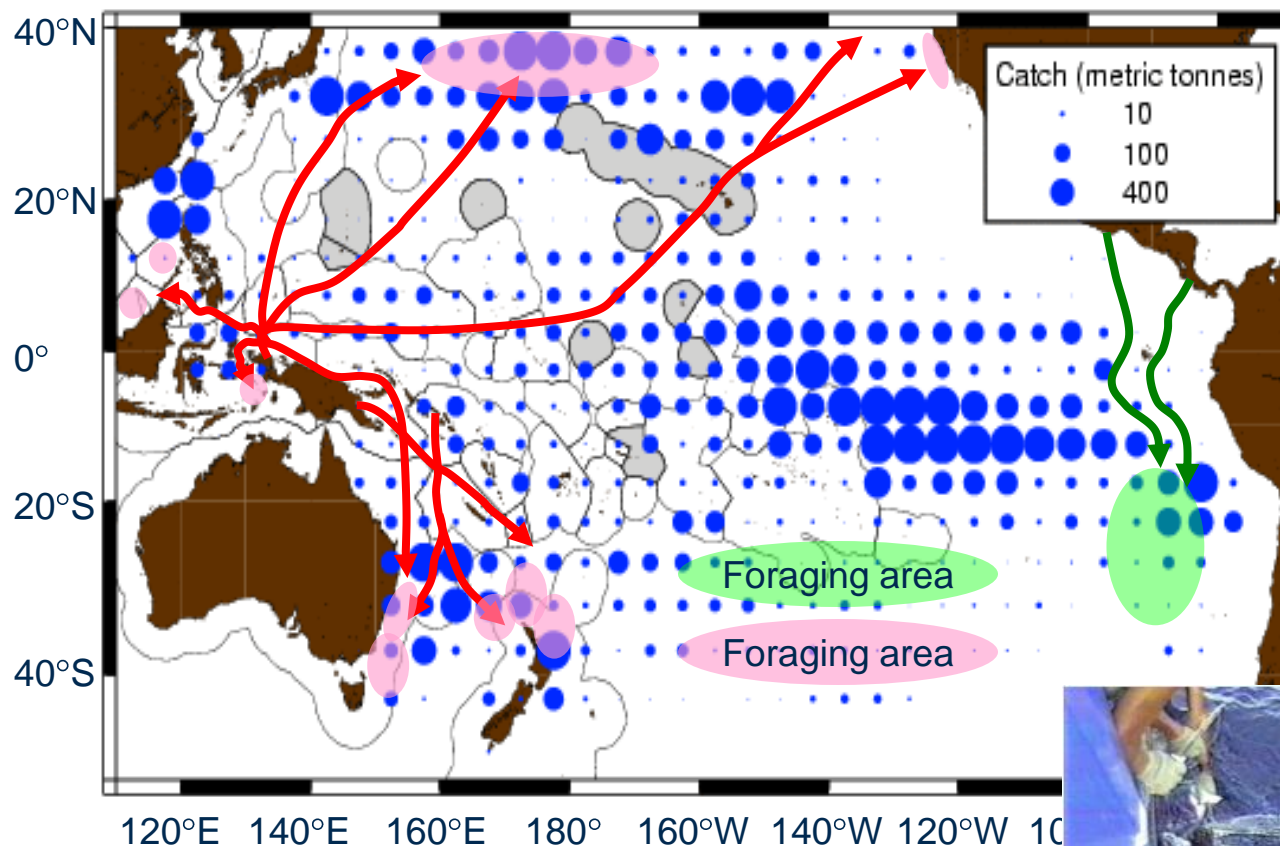
- Established in 1996
- Cooperative effort to minimize and mitigate interactions
  - acoustic pingers
  - net extenders
  - skipper workshops
    - safe handling and release







## Longline catches of swordfish in the Pacific and movements of Pacific leatherback turtles 2005-2008



Source: Benson et al. unpublished; Shillinger 2008, modified from PFMC 2009.





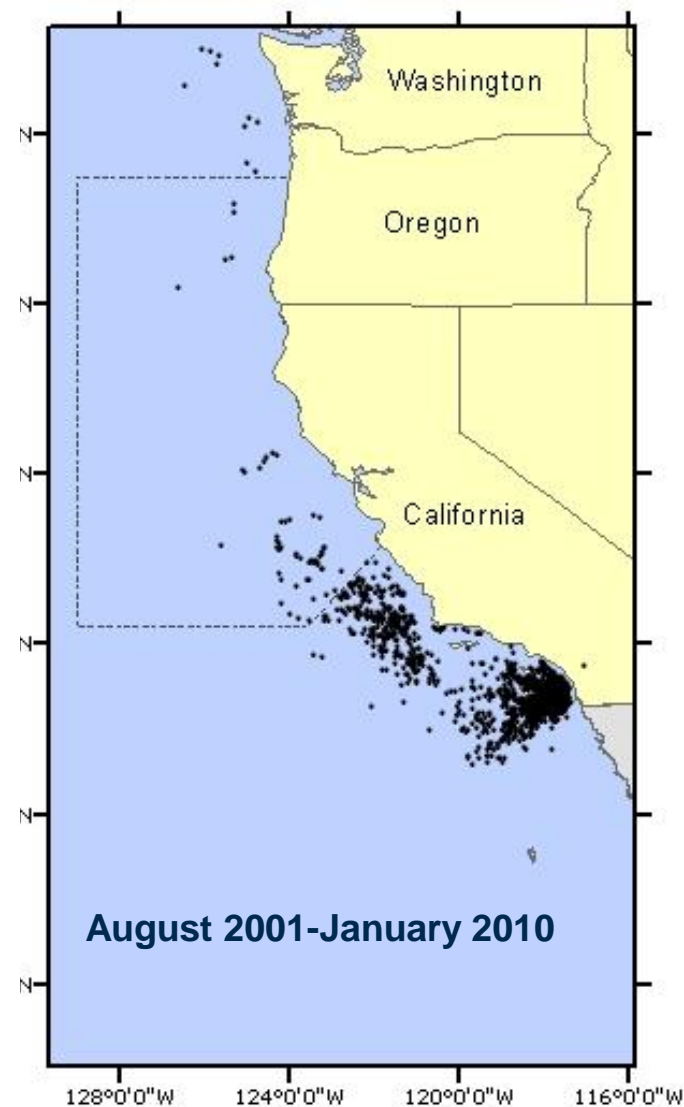
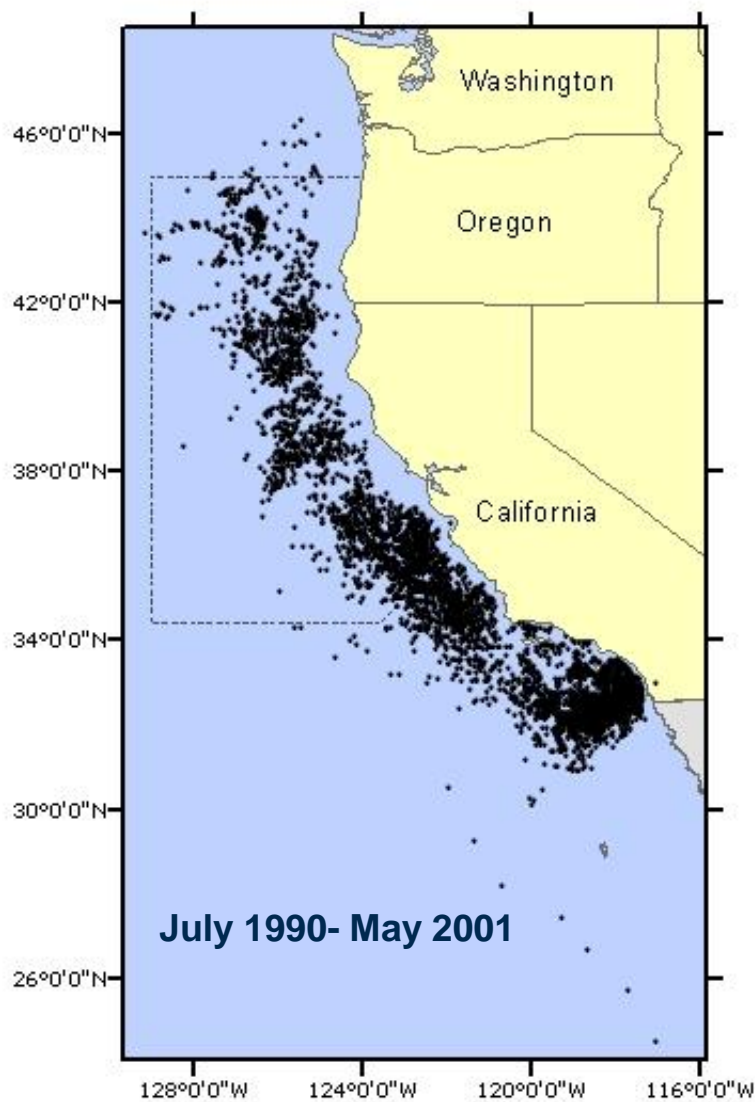
## Pacific Sea Turtle Conservation Area

- established 2001
- 230,000 sq miles
- protect leatherback & loggerhead turtles
- drift gillnet closure





- DGN sets before closure (left) and after closure (right)
- Fishery now restricted to SC Bight





## Conclusions

- Federally managed fisheries through the Council system, an open, transparent public-private process
- Magnuson Act addressing overfishing concerns nationwide
- Bycatch issues being addressed to the extent practical
  - U.S. fishermen working cooperatively with NMFS to design and implement innovative gear and methods to reduce interactions
  - Gear and operations modifications hold most promise for continued fishing
- Existing West Coast swordfish fisheries sustainably managed
- Goals of Dept. of Commerce
  - keep U.S. fishermen fishing
  - provide jobs, income, and benefits to local ports and communities
  - protect and conserve habitat & ecosystem components including protected and sensitive species